DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 164 556 95 TM 007 276

AUTHOR Horyna, Richard L.; Nielsen, Jerry O.
TITLE Community Education Needs Assessment and Evaluation Guidebook.
INSTITUTION Nevada State Dept. of Education, Carson City.
SPONS AGENCY Office of Education (DHEW), Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE 77
NOTE 50p.; Parts may not reproduce clearly due to colored ink

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$2.06 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Community Education; *Community Programs; Community Resources; Community Surveys; Data Analysis; *Evaluation Methods; Guides; *Needs Assessment; *Program Evaluation; Program Planning

ABSTRACT

The needs assessment process is broken down into nine steps: (1) identifying community leaders; (2) defining assessment terms; (3) developing areas of concern; (4) conducting the assessment; (5) data analysis; (6) prioritizing; (7) analysis of probable success in meeting needs; (8) planning the program; and (9) evaluation. Surveys are discussed, including both agency and community opinion surveys. Appendices include a 16-item bibliography; questions for assessing available community resources; a list of service and community organizations; a one-page checklist for survey questionnaires; considerations for conducting a needs assessment; and stages in evaluation of community education. (Author/GDC)

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# COMMUNITY EDUCATION NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION GUIDEBOOK

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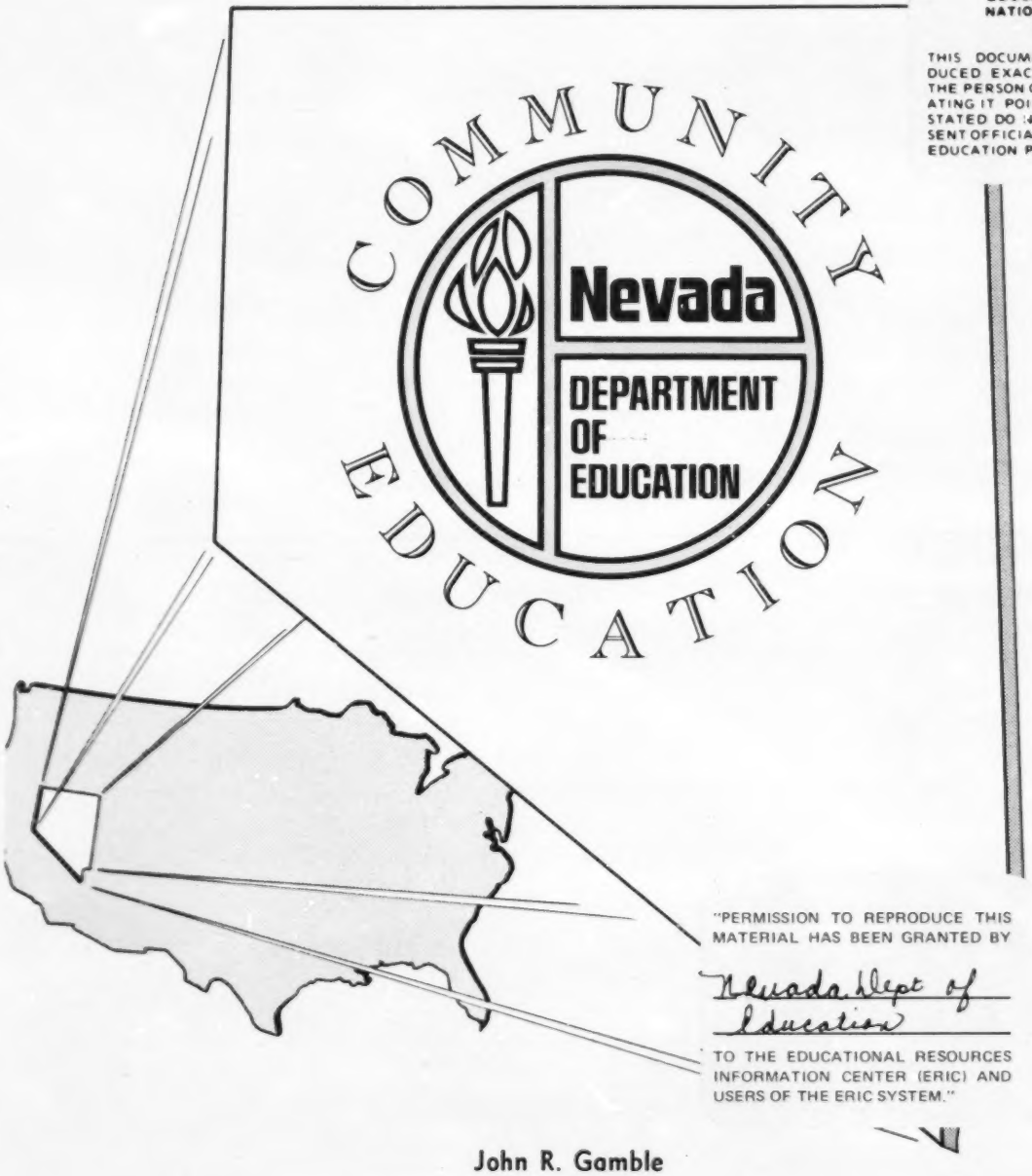


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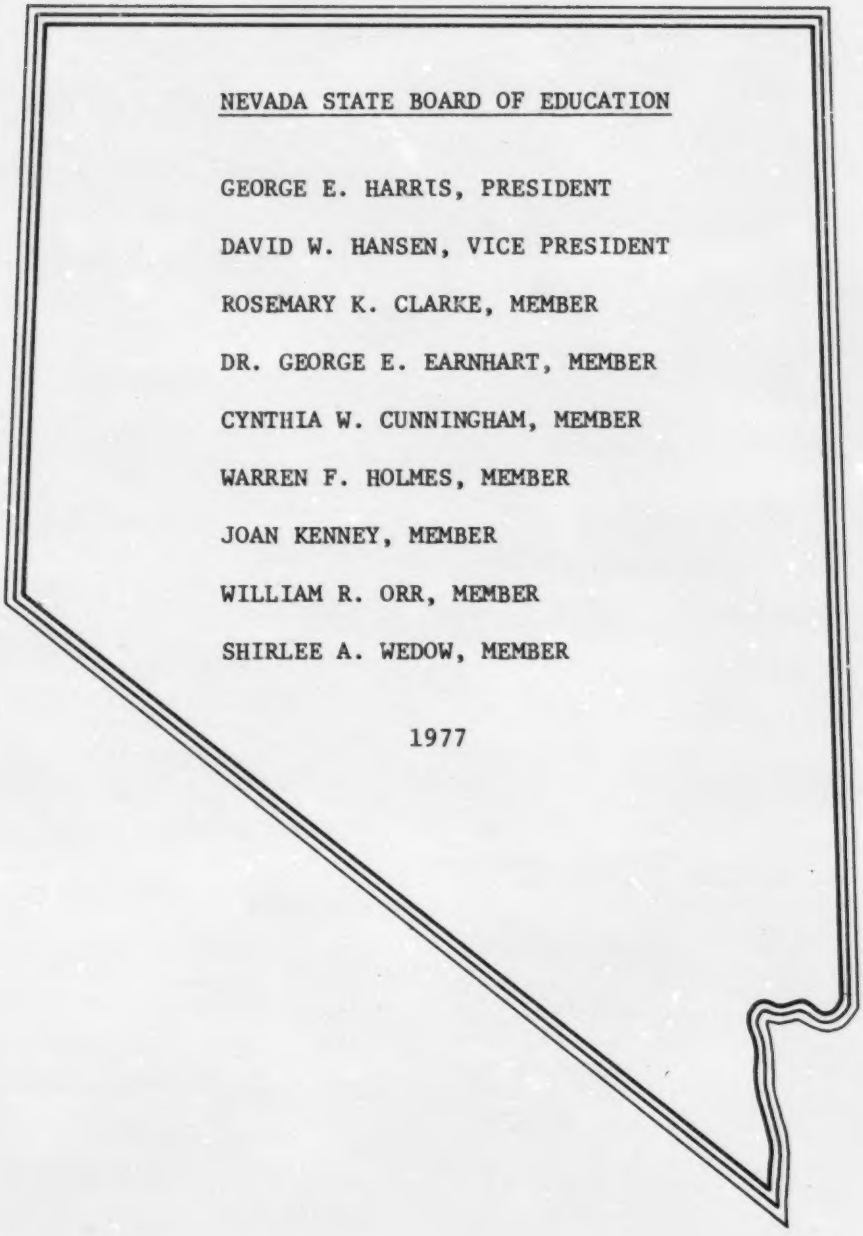

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This Community Education Needs Assessment and Evaluation Guidebook was developed in 1977 by Richard L. Horyna, Community Education Specialist, and Jerry O. Nielsen, Task Force Chairman, with special assistance from the Nevada Department of Education Task Force on Community Education: Dr. Kay W. Palmer, James H. Menath, Victor M. Hyden and LaMar LeFevre.

The Task Force would like to extend their appreciation to the following institutions and individuals for their assistance in the development of this publication.

The Board of Education
Flint, Michigan

Utah Community Progress
Utah State University
Logan, Utah

Iowa State University
Cooperative Extension Service
Ames, Iowa

Dr. David A. Santellanes, Associate Director
Northwest Regional Center for Community Education Development
University of Oregon
Eugene, Oregon

Dr. Lewis Polizzi, Vice Principal
George Dilworth Middle School
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Community School Coordinator
Mineral County School District
Hawthorne, Nevada

Educational Improvement Center
Pitman, New Jersey

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# COMMUNITY EDUCATION NEEDS ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION GUIDELINES

## I. INTRODUCTION

Community Education has often been described in terms of programs and processes. A program is defined as a specific activity designed to meet a specific need; while process is defined as community involvement and action. A carefully planned and implemented community education needs and resource assessment will pinpoint real community needs and its resources, thus taking much of the guesswork out of the program development process. Effective needs resource assessment also provides a basis for setting objectives and evaluating results.

In a community of limited resources, it is not possible to resolve all needs simultaneously. For this reason, it is advantageous to identify the most critical needs and focus the necessary resources on them.

Assessment collects relevant information for use in decision-making. This substantiates the rationale for resulting programs and activities. A comprehensive assessment documents facts, figures, opinions, feelings, and trends which justify the "why" of any action for decision-makers.

Assessment gives strong assurance that a sustained effort will be made to thoroughly resolve the most important needs. It helps to avoid the vacillation of shifting emphasis and resource allocation from one problem to another without ever resolving any of them. Through efficient needs assessment more appropriate goals can be established for community education.

The assessment process also identifies those human and physical resources which can be brought to bear on the needs of a community. Assessment can improve communications within a community by bringing together school, governmental entities, community residents and others to discuss what their needs are and to identify the resources of the community in which they live.

This document has been developed as a general guide for community groups interested in gaining insights and information about their community. Successful community education endeavors are those which address themselves to real community needs. It is imperative that the wealth of available information and resources in a community be gathered and constantly updated.

As it is not within the scope of this document to discuss every particular problem that may arise, it is suggested that various community assessment strategies presented here may be adopted or modified to the needs of a particular community. The sequential steps, 1-9, of the needs assessment procedure suggested here is meant to serve as a guide to those conducting an assessment. It is aimed at involving the citizens, service and educational entities in looking at some of the more difficult problems of their community, and at assuring that the interests of the people are a major influence in planning programs that meet local needs.

## II. NEEDS ASSESSMENT - THE GENERAL PROCESS[1]

A successful needs assessment, regardless of the size of the community involved, requires the completion of nine major steps. Needs assessments, using either formal or informal methods, should follow this general sequence:

Step 1 -- Identifying People and Roles

Step 2 -- Speaking the Same Language

Step 3 -- Stating Concerns and Goals

Step 4 -- Conducting the Assessment

Step 5 -- Analyzing the Data

Step 6 -- Stating the Need and Setting Priorities

Step 7 -- Determining the Feasibility of Meeting the Needs

Step 8 -- Planning the Program (Objectives and Procedures)

Step 9 -- Evaluation

If a group is thinking about doing a community assessment, it is important to realize that the group needs to:

1. Agree that an assessment is needed.
2. Have a committment to do an assessment.

In making decisions on the above two issues, take some time to discuss the value an assessment has for your community. Agreement and committment are both necessary; otherwise, you may get started but never complete the task.

---

[1]U.S., Department of Health, Education and Welfare. Office of Education. A Guide to Needs Assessment In Community Education. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1976), p.7.

Step 1: Identifying People and Roles

An individual, agency or organization would discover immediately that they could not conduct an assessment of the community without involving people. Determining which people must become involved, what functions they will perform, and what role they will play must be done before a needs assessment of he community can be undertaken.

In the initial stages there is a need to determine how the participation of community residents and individuals representing various community agencies and organizations can be generated in the needs assessment and in other aspects of the community education process.

A commonly used procedure is the establishment of a community advisory council, either appointed or elected, which is representative of different groups or agencies within the community. In many communities such a group may already exist. (i.e., P.T.A., concerned citizens group.) This group should have some "official" authorization if they are to be recognized by the community in their assessment activities. This could be accomplished through the endorsement of an official agency such as a school board, board of commissioners, or city council.

From this representative body must come the leadership for conducting a needs assessment. A suggested strategy is to appoint/employ a coordinator. The coordinator of the needs assessment effort should be responsible for coordinating the needs assessment. This task would include planning the process, gathering source data, preparing information for the needs assessment committee (see page 5), and assembling the results into a useable product.

The assessment group may want to carry out the procedure suggested below. One of the more effective approaches has been the formation of

needs assessment planning committee that includes representatives from the following types of agencies, organizations, and citizen groups. [2]

| | |
|---|---|
| Educational: | Public school, private school, PTA, community college, university, public library, and adult education programs both formal and informal. |
| Recreational: | Parks and recreation departments, YMCA, YWCA |
| Cultural: | Arts society, little theatre group |
| Social: | Social services agency, family services agency, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, service clubs |
| Health: | Public health department, community mental health center, hospital |
| Community Planning and Development: | Planning department, United Way Planning Council |
| Local Government: | Mayor's Office, County Commissioners, fiscal officers, law enforcement agencies |
| Citizen groups: | League of Women Voters, Neighborhood Development Council |
| Individuals: | Key resource people with broad knowledge of the community, representatives of the various segments of the population. |
| Business and Labor Organizations: | Trade associations |

Members should be selected for their knowledge of the community, experience in the delivery of human services, participation in community programs, and experience in planning and supervising community service programs.

At the first meeting of the needs assessment committee, an orientation should be presented dealing with the concept of community education. They

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[2] Ibid., P.9.

must be made aware of the scope of the project and their role and function in the process. This group will be able to provide much of the baseline demographic data which is needed. (Figure 1) This information provides a clear picture of the community in terms of the quality of life. A second level of assessment must be derived from observed and expressed needs and interests of individuals, groups, and the various segments of the population. This aspect of assessment will be discussed in detail under Step 4.

FIGURE 1

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

| Area of Information | Information to Include | Source of Information | Fill in Here |
|---|---|---|---|
| A. Population Statistics | How many people in your service area?<br><br>Age of population<br>No. of children 0-18<br>No. of adults 18-44<br>No. of adults 45-64<br>No. of adults 65+<br><br>Pre-school<br>School Youth<br>18-21<br>21-64<br>65+ | 1970 U.S. Census<br>State Departments of Education<br>School Boards<br><br>Local Regional, Surveys<br>Nevada Datafile | _____<br><br>_____<br>_____<br>_____<br>_____<br><br>Male Female Total<br><br>_____<br>_____<br>_____<br>_____<br>_____<br>_____ |
| B. Educational Levels of Population | Percent and number of out-of-school adults over 16 who have less than 8 years of schooling<br>Percent and number of out-of-school adults over 16 who have less than 12 years of schooling<br>Grade Completed<br>0<br>1-4<br>5-7<br>8<br>9-12<br>High School Graduates<br>13+<br>College Graduates | 1970 U.S. Census, or Area Supervisor of Adult Basic Education | %_____<br>No._____<br><br>%_____<br>No._____<br><br>_____<br>_____<br>_____<br>_____ |
| C. Economic Levels of Population | Percent of families whose income is below the poverty level<br><br>Median Income<br>Family<br>Per Capita<br><br>Percent of unemployment of adults over 16<br><br>What are the chief employers for your service area? | 1970 U.S. Census<br>Employment Security<br><br>Welfare Agencies<br>Community Action Programs<br><br>Employment Security<br>Mayor's Office<br>Local Planning Commission<br>Community Action Program<br>Nevada Datafile | %_____<br>_____<br>_____<br>_____<br><br>%_____<br><br>NAME/KIND OF WORK PRESENTLY<br>Working Not Working<br>_____<br>_____<br>_____<br>_____<br><br>NEW<br>_____<br>_____<br>_____<br>_____ |
| D. National and racial background of population | Give percent of racial and national groups which make up the population of your service area | 1970 U.S. Census<br>City, County, or Area Supervisor of Adult Basic Education<br>NAACP | CITY COUNTY<br>White _____ _____<br>Black _____ _____<br>Non English-Speaking _____ _____<br>Indian _____ _____<br>Oriental _____ _____<br>Other _____ _____ |
| E. Geographic area you serve | Square miles | | _____ |

FIGURE 1(Cont)

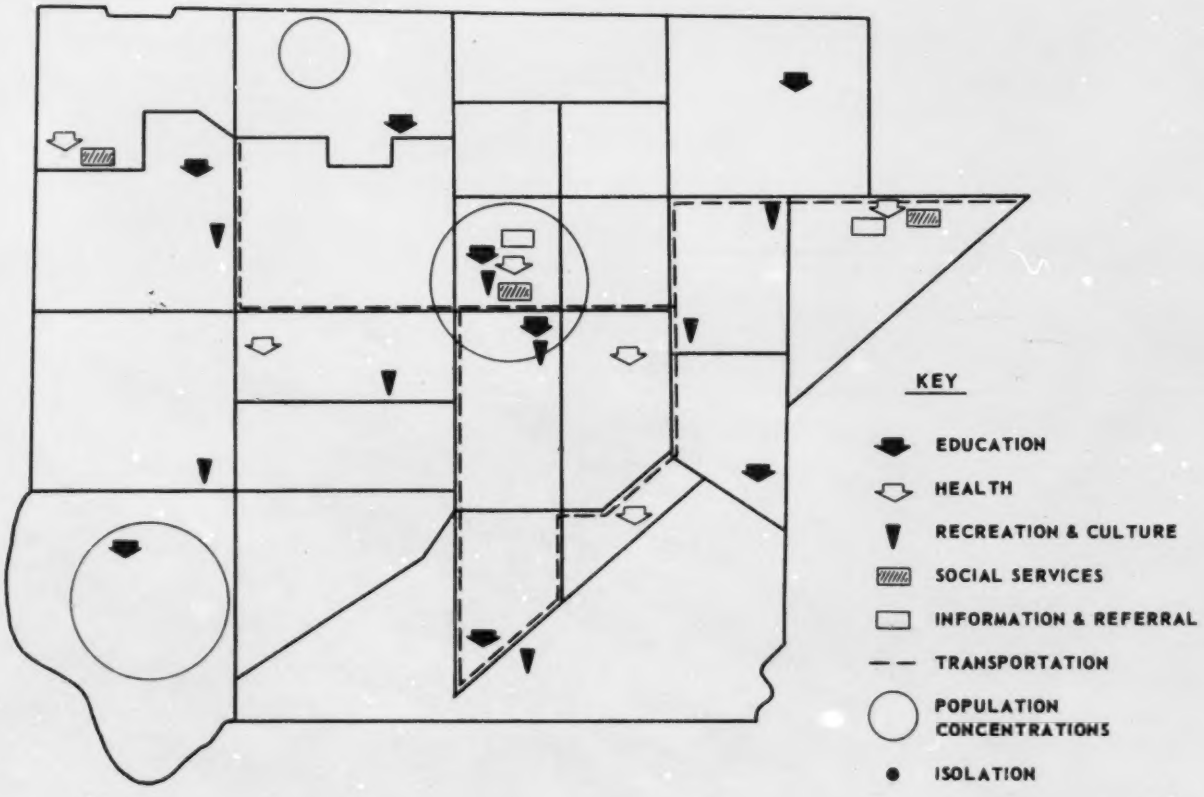
DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

| Area of Information | Information to Include | Source of Information | Fill in Here |
|---|---|---|---|
| F. Educational offerings in community | List of adult basic education and other educational activities available to your service area | City or County Supervisor of Adult Education<br>Community Action Program<br><br>Public Schools<br>Private Schools<br>Area Vocational Schools<br>Bureau of Rehabilitation Services<br>Community College<br>Technical School<br>YMCA & YWCA<br>Recreation Department<br>MDTA(Manpower Development Training Act)<br>WIN(Work Incentive)<br>NYC(Neighborhood Youth Corps)<br>CEP(Concentrated Employment Programs)<br>CETA(Comprehensive Employment Training Act)<br>New Careers Program<br>Voluntary Groups | KIND/SITE/NO. ENROLLED |
| G. Other Community services available | List of community services available | Health Department<br>Welfare Department<br>Social Security<br>Chamber of Commerce<br>Community Action Programs<br>Comprehensive Care<br>Food & Nutrition Services<br>Child Care Programs<br>Housing Authorities<br>Voluntary Groups<br>Planning Commission<br>Mental Health<br>Family Planning Clinic<br>Radio Stations<br>Newspapers<br>Senior Citizens<br>Home Demonstration Agent<br>Agricultural Extension Agent | SERVICE/AGENCY |
| H. Information and referral services available | Is there a central source of community agency and organization in your community | United Fund<br>Public Library<br>Planning Commission<br>Comprehensive Health Care | |
| Additional Information | | | |

Figure 2 illustrates a map of a community service area showing facilities, services and population distributions. A graphic display of this type can be of value in further assessing community needs during the initial stages.

FIGURE 2

MAP OF COMMUNITY SERVICES[4]




[4]Ibid., p. 12.

Step 2: Speaking the Same Language

The people involved with the needs assessment process should have a common understanding of key terms. The following are some suggested definitions of frequently used terms:

Assessment - Process to determine the specific nature of needs in order that programs or treatments may be designed to alleviate or resolve those needs. It should answer two main questions: 1. Where are we? 2. Where do we go from here?

Community - A community is a geographic clustering of people that makes possible human interaction in solving problems of concern to all. In rural areas, the geographic clustering may be by townships, or even by counties in sparsly populated areas. Clustering may also be in villages or townships. In the urban setting, clustering may be by ghetto, neighborhood, or suburb.

Community Education Advisory Council - A representative group of citizens acting in an advisory capacity to the coordinator of community education. Their function is to give direction to community education development by assessing community needs and resources, coordinating school, agency and organization efforts to eliminate duplication and increase cooperation, and functions as a communications link between local institutions and the community.

Community Education Coordinator - A person responsible for the coordination of all formal community education activities within a community.

Concern - A matter for consideration which demands a greater amount of analysis than does a specific problem.

Evaluation - A process in which measurement and judgement are combined to make possible decisions which will change and improve the community.

| | |
|---|---|
| Goal | - A broad, general statement, setting a sense of direction from which objectives and tasks can be developed. |
| Need | - A discrepancy between conditions as they actually exist in a community at a given point in time and the desired conditions the community expects. The lack of something which, according to the best information available, is necessary for the improvement of the quality of life in the community. |
| Objective | - A statement of desired outcomes. |
| Prioritize | - To rank as primary importance to resource allocation. |
| Resource | - Any human talents or physical capabilities which might be used to produce a worthwhile experience. |

This list is not all inclusive. People working together should arrive at some agreement concerning the use of terms whenever a lack of understanding seems to impede their progress.

Step 3: Stating the Concerns

Once the community has organized a group which can serve in an advisory capacity, and the group has been made aware of the processes of and potential for community education, they should develop some general areas of concern and translate those concerns into objective statements. These concerns may be later revised as data is collected. The process of stating concerns serves four important purposes in the development of community education. They are:

1. To give each member a sense of participation prior to the gathering of specific data;
2. To give the group a sense of the concerns of other community agencies and individuals;
3. To provide the citizen represented on the committee an insight into the function of each represented agency;
4. To provide a background against which data collection can be analyzed[5].

[5]Ibid., P.14.

For example:

| | |
|---|---|
| Concern: | Apparent lack of educational offerings for adults |
| Objective: | Assess need-perceived and actual |
| Goal: | All adults should have opportunities to complete high school diploma courses or participate in other educational offerings |

Step 4: Conducting the Assessment

A look at any community will indicate many immediate community concerns and needs, some with seemingly obvious solutions and others which are likely to require long-lasting programs or projects. A common mistake at this point is to select a problem because "it just seems like the right thing to do". The problem solving stage comes after all the information has been gathered and studied. It is imperative that information can be gathered to prevent the group from working on the wrong problem, basing their recommendations on the wrong information, or directing efforts toward symptoms rather than problems.

The purpose of needs assessment is to determine the gaps that exist between the needs of the community and the services and programs available to meet those needs. Based on the general concerns identified by the groups, a validation of these perceived needs is in order. The data required for validation may be obtained from various sources including human service agencies and organizations and from community residents. When assessing needs and attitudes of a community there are many directions you can go for information. A road map[6] of a community needs assessment might resemble Figure 3.

The route which the group takes to ascertain the needs of the community will depend on the group. The following methods, while not all inclusive, have been proven to be effective tools.

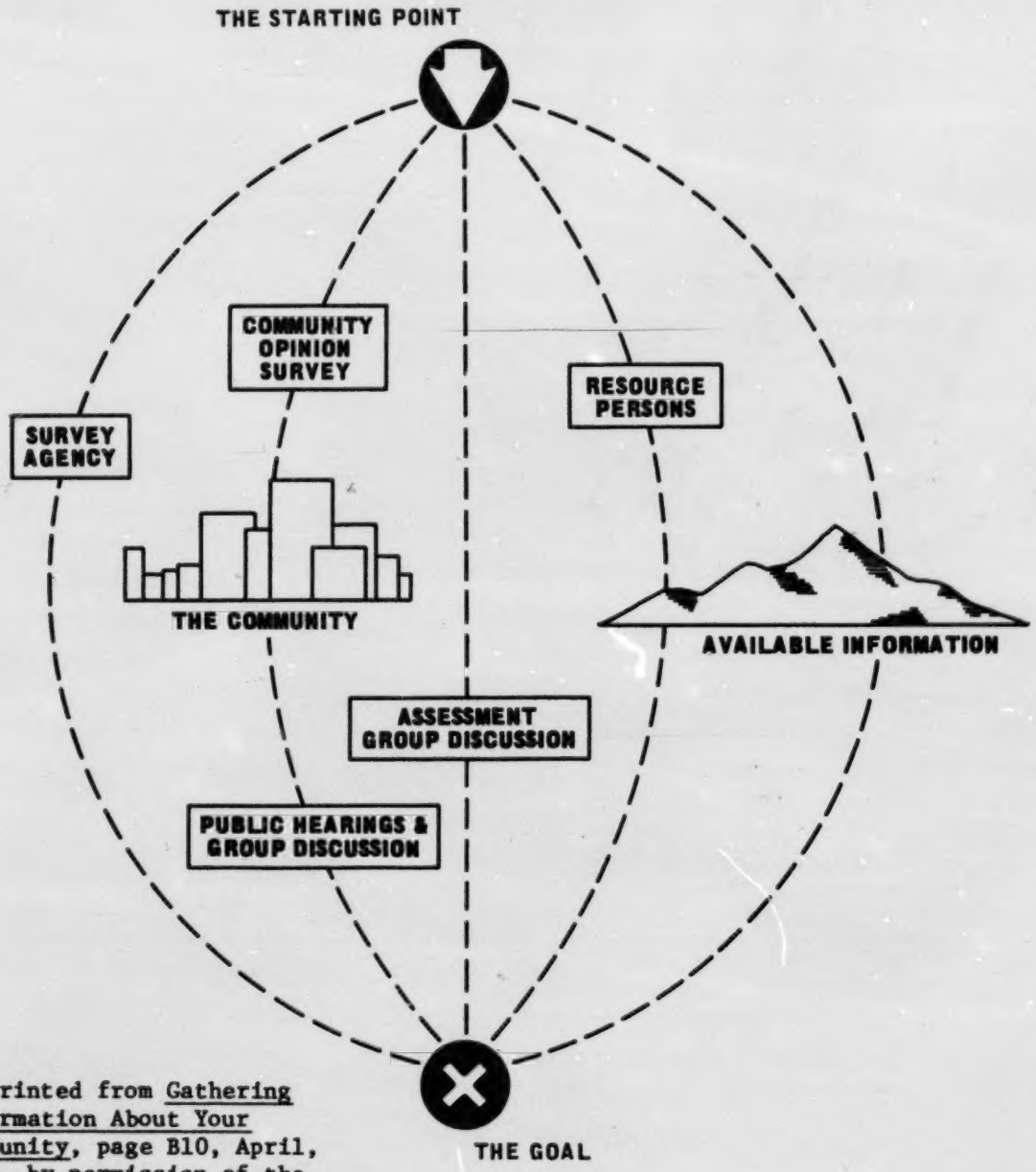
---

[6]Gathering Information About Your Community. (Flint: The Planning Office of the Flint Community Schools, 1975), p. B10.

FIGURE 3

COLLECTING THE INFORMATION

TOPICS CHOSEN BY THE ASSESSMENT GROUP




Reprinted from Gathering Information About Your Community, page B10, April, 1975, by permission of the Board of Education, Flint, Michigan. Some information has been altered for consideration of textual format.

1. The Agency Survey

The agency survey is one of the most frequent types of surveys included in a community assessment. The agency survey is conducted by interviewing representatives of the agencies working in your community.

Among the topics you will wish to consider in agency interviews are:

--What services does the agency offer for your community?

--Whom does it serve in your community?

--How does it communicate its services to the community?

--What is the agency view of the needs in your community ?

--What are trends in demand for agency services and what is the agency's ability to respond in the community?

--What possibilities exist for coordination of activities with the agency?

When the agencies have been surveyed the committee should consider the findings, looking for:

1. Gaps in services;
2. Duplications in service;
3. Delivery system;
4. Communication links.

The following are examples of forms that might be used:

FIGURE 4

COMMUNITY SERVICE AND ACTIVITY NEEDS[7]

DATE:_____

Agency Name_____Person Responding_____

Geographic Area Served_____Facility location(s)_____

I. Please indicate by the type of service, activity, or training your agency provides, the number of individuals participating during the current year and number on your waiting list.

| CURRENT YEAR SERVICES, ACTIVITIES & TRAINING | NUMBER PARTICIPATING | NUMBER ON WAITING LIST |
|---|---|---|
| | | |

[7] A Guide to Needs Assessment in Community Education, op.cit., P.15.

FIGURE 5

## COMMUNITY SERVICE AND ACTIVITY INVENTORY[8]

A key part of a Community Education Program is an assessment of the needs of citizens in the community for community services, training, and activities. Because of your knowledge of the community and its services, we request that you provide us with the following information on participation by citizens in your service programs and activities.

Thank you for your help.

Name of service and activity or training provided_____

_____

_____

Please list eligibility requirements, if any, for citizen participation in your service, activity, or training program:

_____

_____

_____

Please give the number of individuals who participated in programs during the current year; if not available, please estimate.

| SEX | NO. PART. THIS YEAR | | | INCOME LEVEL | NO. PART. THIS YEAR | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Male | _____ | _____ | _____ | Under $5,000 | _____ | _____ |
| | | | | $5,000-10,000 | _____ | _____ |
| Female | _____ | _____ | _____ | $10,000-15,000 | _____ | _____ |
| | | | | Over $15,000 | _____ | _____ |
| AGE GROUP | | | | FAMILY SIZE | | |
| Pre-school Youth | _____ | _____ | _____ | 2-person | _____ | _____ |
| School-age Youth | _____ | _____ | _____ | 3-person | _____ | _____ |
| 14-17 | _____ | _____ | _____ | 4-person | _____ | _____ |
| 18-21 | _____ | _____ | _____ | 5-person | _____ | _____ |
| 21-65 | _____ | _____ | _____ | over 5-person | _____ | _____ |
| Over 65 | _____ | _____ | _____ | | | |

_____

Prepared by:_____ Date:_____

Organizational Affiliation:_____

_____

[8] Ibid., P.16.

2. Community Opinion Survey

A community opinion survey is another frequently used device for gathering information about the needs of the community. A good survey can tell you what your community residents are concerned about and how they feel about the community. The one drawback to a citizen survey is that it takes time to prepare and requires careful analysis on the part of the assessment group if the findings are to be valid. Again, it is not within the scope of this document to develop a survey form--this must be developed by the assessment group. When using the survey, three approaches to gathering the information are suggested:[9]

A. Hearings & Discussion Groups: This method is popular for many Federal, state, and county human service programs. Notification is usually published in the local newspaper, stating the purpose of the meeting and inviting interested persons to attend. Attendees are given an opportunity to express themselves at the meeting, and staff summarizes the results for use in the later ranking of citizen needs.

B. Interviews: Two types of interviews can be used, the person-to-person interview and the telephone interview. The assessment groups would need to examine the advantages and disadvantages of each type of interview.

C. Mail-out Survey: The mail-out survey involves developing a questionnaire and finding the addresses of a representative number of individuals in the community. The major drawback is a low return.

3. Assessment Group Discussions

The assessment group is composed of people from varying backgrounds representing different agencies and organizations. The contributions which each member can make to the group should not be overlooked. Many facts about the community can be ascertained by group discussion; opinions can be shared; and much of the agency information might be obtained from representatives of the community. Remember, this route is most effective only when the advisory/assessment group is fairly representative of the community.

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[9]Ibid., P. 17.

4. Resource Persons

An underlying premise of community education is that within each community there are people who possess unique skills or talents which are often overlooked when assessing the resources of that community.

Within the scope of assessment, efforts need to be made to identify those people in the community who possess leadership or other skills which might benefit the community.

In many cases these people are known because of their involvement in community activities. However, many additional resource people can be identified through the assessment process by asking such questions as the following:

1. If you wanted to learn the feelings or attitudes of the community, what three people would you ask?

2. Identify those persons in your community who you feel represent positions of leadership.

3. If you wanted to gain the thinking of the community on an important issue, what five people would represent the feeling of the community? What segment of the community do they represent? How can they be contacted?

5. Other Available Information

When conducting an assessment of the community, every effort must be made to gather all available information. Obvious sources of information are often overlooked.

Newspaper offices, Chambers of Commerce, public libraries, statewide agencies--all have information which is accessible to the assessment group. A concerted effort to explore all sources of information will make the final statements of need more valid for the assessment group.

Whichever approach or combination of approaches is selected for the community education needs assessment, a survey form should be developed to record the answers from the citizens. Assistance in the development of community surveys may be obtained from Regional/State Centers for Community Education Development.

Step 5. Analyzing the Data

Upon completion of the needs assessment activities, the assessment group must analyze the data which has been collected in order to (1) determine the relationship of the data to the stated goal of the assessment, and, (2) ascertain the relationship of needs to one another. The second determination will assist the assessment group in ranking the items in order of importance.

In the area of analysis there needs to be a uniform way in which the data collected will provide useable information. One suggested method is the use of an Inpact Analysis Form.[9]

FIGURE 6

INPACT ANALYSIS FORM

Name of Activity or Service_____

I. Current Service Available
   Total number of people in need _____
   Total number of people currently being served _____
   Unmet needs _____
   Percent of need satisfied _____

II. Perceived Need by the Community
   Needed more _____
   Adequate _____
   Exceeds current need _____
   Not needed _____

[9]Ibid., P.20.

If the assessment document is to cover a variety of topics (i.e., senior citizens, recreation for youth, attitudes toward community education) the inpact analysis form may be applied to each major category. This requires that careful planning goes into the preparation of questions in order to obtain meaningful and useful data.

Once the data has been collected and analyzed, a clearer picture of community needs should begin to evolve.

Step 6. Stating the Need and Setting Priorities

The analysis of available data will provide the assessment group with factual information required for stating the needs and setting priorities. Stating needs and setting priorities means weighing several conditions:

1. The importance of each goal as determined by the needs assessment group using a priority rating form (Figure 7, 7a) for each stated goal.
2. Time and investment required to develop a program to satisfy the need.
3. Potential resources that can be utilized to meet the need.

Step 7. Determining the Feasibility of Meeting the Needs

Having set its priorities, the group should then examine the feasibility of each priority. This means looking at existing resources and potential resources which can be brought to bear upon the identified need and some of the possible constraints. At this point the group might consider attacking a lower-priority need to insure initial success and gain community involvement before attempting the higher priority items. The only caution suggested here is that the group avoid setting their sights "too low".

FIGURE 7

COMMUNITY NEEDS ANALYSIS CHART

| (To be Specified) Area<br><br>STATEMENTS OF WHAT EXISTS (What is) | (To be Specified) Area<br><br>EXPECTATIONS (What Ought to Be) | NEED (What Gap Exists) | RESOURCES (What is Available) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Factual information which describes a previous or present state or condition of service or activity in the community. | Information of an opinionated or attitudinal nature may describe a future desired condition.<br><br>It may also refer to information describing the expectations or wants of individuals or groups regarding conditions that do not presently exist. | What the community sees as a need.<br><br>Identifies gaps in existing services. | What resources can be brought to bear upon the identified needs. |

CIRCLE ONE

1. Extremely critical; 2. Very Critical; 3. Important but not critical; 4. Not critical or Important; 5. Undecided or Unknown.

FIGURE 7A

SAMPLE OF COMMUNITY NEEDS ANALYSIS CHART

| COMMUNITY SERVICES (Area)<br><br>STATEMENTS OF WHAT EXISTS (What is) | COUNSELING (Sub Area)<br><br>EXPECTATIONS (What ought to be) | NEED (What gap exists) | RESOURCES (What is available) |
|---|---|---|---|
| - 20 families now receive counseling from three sources<br>- Counseling takes place in their offices<br>- The school psychologist and social worker have identified 30 families who need but are not receiving any family counseling<br>- The county health nurse has a listing of 17 families with marriage problems<br>- Many agencies could and would increase the number of families served<br>- Many people did not know that counseling services were available or how to fund them | - 40 families should be able to receive counseling<br>- More than three areas for counseling should be available<br>- Those needing counseling services should have access to them<br>- People that are aware of needed counseling services ought to know where referrals can be made | There is a need for more family counselors<br><br>There is a need for areas in which people can receive counseling without going to professional offices<br><br>There is a need for awareness programs to acquaint the public with available programs<br><br>There is a need for special counseling for those with marriage problems<br><br>There is a need for more effective coordination of counseling services | - Four counseling agencies<br>United Fund<br>Catholic charities<br>YMCA<br>Mental Health Clinic<br>- School teachers<br>- School buildings<br>- Church Leaders<br>- Red Cross<br>- 3 private psychologists |

CIRCLE ONE

1. Extremely critical; (2.) Very Critical; 3. Important but not critical; 4. Not critical or important; 5. Undecided or unknown.

Resource requirements for satisfying priorities selected should be estimated. (See Figure 7A). These include: staffing requirement, equipment and physical facilities required and available, cost and time analysis, constraints and prohibitors, realistic appraisal of time required for implementation, and potential for documentation. The coordination of various programs currently being offered into a cohesive plan may help to strengthen a priority need and avoid costly duplication.

Step 8. Planning the Program (Objectives and Procedures)

Once priorities have been agreed upon, the community education program objectives can be established. Objectives are the link between the needs assessment, the program plan, and the evaluation process. Each need should be considered and stated in writing in terms of the following elements:

1. Identification of the need to be satisfied.
2. A rationale for attempting a particular program, with data illustrating need and gaps in existing services.
3. A description of the service or activity to be offered to satisfy the need.
4. Identification of who will be responsible in collaboration for each activity (agreement and commitment of responsible institutions or agencies for staff assignment and resources for each activity).
5. Identification of all additional information or resources that are essential to accomplish the task.
6. Identification of the necessary documentation to enable the planning group to assess activity progress, accomplishments, or products.
   a. Measureable values, such as numbers of people who participate in activities, numbers of people who receive new services, educational achievement, occupational change, or

numbers of services and activities offered which can be used in evaluating the program outcomes

b. Accumulation of qualitative values, administrative decisions, planning records, personal logs with subjective notations on program impact upon individuals, groups, and the community.

7. A record of the monitoring of progress, problems encountered, and changes needed in the developmental process.[10]

Step 9: Evaluation

The ability to establish objectives and assess needs improves each time the process is repeated. The type of evaluation used in a particular community may depend upon the expertise of the coordinator or members of the advisory group. Evaluation, as applied to Community Education, is a process in which measurement and judgment are combined to make decisions which will change and improve Community Education programs or processes.

If community educators sincerely believe in a process orientation, this philosophy must be incorporated into the evaluation process. Tabulations of programs offered and participants enrolled should no longer provide the sole basis for assessing the success or failure of Community Education. Consistent with this philosophy, community educators must concentrate on the process used in an evaluation, as well as the results of the evaluation.

The evaluation of Community Education programs and processes is a matter of determining whether or not the objectives have been met through the activities which were implemented to meet identified needs. If, for example, the needs have not been met, evaluation should tell where your process broke down, and what steps must be changed or modified to meet the objectives.

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[10]Ibid., pp.22-23

It is impossible to isolate evaluation from other Community Education processes. Evaluation must be an ongoing activity which permeates awareness, assessment, program development and other Community Education activities. As is true with all Community Education processes, citizen involvement should be sought. The benefits of such involvement include at least the following: (1) as a result of their involvement in the evaluation process, community residents are more likely to fill out evaluation instruments, as well as encourage others to do the same, thereby generating more valid data; (2) the evaluation process will be viewed less as a spying activity and more as a developmental process; (3) the Community Education philosophy, relative to citizen involvement, will not be violated; (4) there will be a greater likelihood of the community accepting and utilizing the evaluation results in modifying the Community Education program; and, (5) community residents will learn by taking part in the evaluation process.

Dr. David Santellanes, Northwest Center for Community Education, Eugene, Oregon, suggests a feedback system which will provide the community group with information relative to the impact that their efforts have having on the community.[11] This feedback system (Figure 8) is vital because it provides the basis for program decisions. Its sophistication may vary from face-to-face conversations with community residents to periodic community attitudinal surveys. The method will depend on its applicability in any given community.

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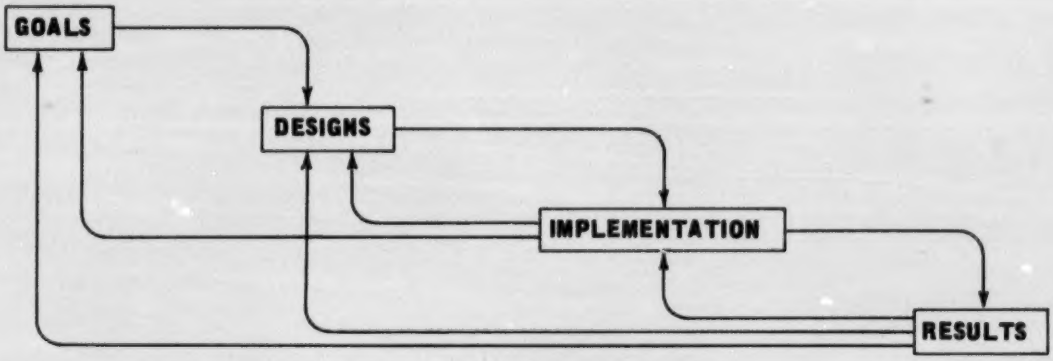
[11] David A. Santellanes, "Process Evaluation in Community Education". Community Education Journal. March/April, 1975. P.20-23

FIGURE 8

PROCESS FEEDBACK SYSTEM




Note: This system emphasizes reflection on previous steps to check on oneself. One progresses by constant backward relationships because a breakdown in any step has direct negative implications for the others.

This particular model emphasizes four basic ingredients:

1. Goals: Community education coordinators should facilitate the development of goals for the Community Education program. This should be accomplished by a representative group of community residents interested in community improvement. Once goals are developed, a critical look should be taken at the process used in their development. The process must be evaluated to assess the extent of community involvement as well as the system used, i.e., majority vote, consensus, etc. As evaluation is a continuous process, this assessment is necessary.

2. Designs: The development of designs (activities/processes) necessary to accomplish goals is the next step. Each goal will determine the type of design most appropriate for its accomplishment. The community education coordinator should involve residents in the consideration and determination of the most appropriate course of action. Again, the process used to determine the designs must be evaluated.

3. Implementation: How are the designs to be implemented? The social climate of the community and its history will be major determinants in answering this question. Past attempts at implementing particular designs and knowledge of the community's social climate will assist community educators and residents in their selection of an implementation strategy.

4. Results: An analytical look should be taken at the effects caused by the first three steps. Those directly affected by the intended actions should be involved in determining their effectiveness in meeting the program goals. The processes/instruments used to gather consumer reactions should also be assessed as to their effectiveness in gathering appropriate data.

If the results of a Community Education program are negative, an analysis of each step should be conducted. The negative results may be attributed to problems in any one of the four (4) steps. For example, a particular goal may not have been appropriate. If it was appropriate, the design (activity/process) used to accomplish it may not have been the best selection. If both the goal and design were appropriate, the implementation strategy used may not have been best suited for the target community. Finally, if all of the first three (3) steps were appropriate, the instruments/processes used to gather data may not have been relevant for gathering significant information for decisions relative to program effectiveness. An analysis of all steps (Figure 9) will usually identify the problem and corrective measures may be taken.

FIGURE 9

PROCESS EVALUATION MODEL

Questions to be Answered

| Goals | Designs | Implementation | Results |
|---|---|---|---|
| What are the needs and interests of the community?<br>How can these needs and interests best be met?<br>What method is used in the goal setting process?<br>Who is involved in determining community goals?<br>How are people involved in the goal-setting process? | What activities/processes will accomplish goals?<br>What alternative designs are considered?<br>What method(s) is used for design selection?<br>What criteria are used for design selection?<br>Who is involved in determining designs for goal achievement?<br>How are people involved in the design selection process? | What implementation strategies are considered?<br>What criteria are used for strategy selection?<br>What selection process is used?<br>Who is involved in the selection process?<br>How are people involved in the selection process? | What data-gathering and analysis processes will provide significant data?<br>What data-gathering and analysis processes are considered?<br>What data-gathering and analysis processes/instruments are selected?<br>Who is involved in the selection and data analysis process?<br>How are people involved in the selection and data analysis process? |

## CONCLUSION

This document was not developed to offer all of the answers to Needs Assessment and Evaluation questions which will develop during field use. As a guidebook, the materials can be adopted or modified to fit the needs of a particular community. As you review or utilize any of the material contained in this publication, your comments and suggestions would be appreciated by the Nevada Center for Community Education.

## III. BIBLIOGRAPHY

### PRIMARY SOURCES

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4. OTHER SOURCES

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Levy, Marc R. Assessing Your Community on Overlay Maps. Eugene: Northwest Community Education Development Center, 1975.

Radig, John E. Community Education: Need/Resource Assessment Guidebook. Pitman, N.J.: Educational Improvement Center--South Jersey Region, 1974.

Community Survey, The. Ames, Iowa: Iowa State University, 1964.

Gathering Information About Your Community. Flint: Board of Education, 1975.

Utah Community Progress Workbook. Logan: Utah State University, 1973.

APPENDICES: INFORMATION RESOURCES

## A. RESOURCE ASSESSMENT

1. What facilities in the community are currently used by the public for community activities?

2. What facilities are not being used--and could be used--to house public activities?

3. What facilities are used on a full-time basis by the public?

   a. What facilities are not?

      1) how may they be used more fully?

      2) who should you talk to about this?

4. What businesses or industries are predominant in your community?

5. Do you have a community college, university or college nearby?

6. What are the various private clubs and associations in your community?

7. Are there any major foundations located in your community?

8. What are the human services available in the community?

9. What are the major leisure activities and facilities for those available in the community?

Since the process of resource assessment is intricate and must be adapted to your specific community, we suggest the following works:

1. The Development of a Community Education Need/Resource Assessment Guidebook. Educational Improvement Center, Woodbury-Glassboro Road, Box 426, Pitman, New Jersey 08071.*

2. Gathering Information About Your Community. Flint Community Schools, 923 East Kearsley Street, Flint, Michigan 48503.*

*Copies available for reference at the Nevada Center for Community Education.

## B. RESOURCES FOR THE ASSESSMENT DIRECTOR

### Local Service and Community Organizations

American Cancer Society
Big Brothers
Heart Association
Christian Welfare Institute
Disabled American Veterans
Easter Seal Society
Girl Scout Council
Goodwill Industries
University Extension Service
Muscular Dystrophy Association
NAACP
Foundation for the Blind
Red Cross
Salvation Army
United Fund
YMCA
YWCA
American Legion
Better Business Bureau
Jaycees
Masonic Lodges
Boys' Clubs
Elks Lodges
Knights of Columbus
League of Women Voters
Veterans of Foreign Wars
Boy Scouts
Lions Clubs
Chamber of Commerce
Health Clubs
Recreation
Association of General Building Contractors
Association of Scientist and Professional Engineering
Council on Economic Opportunity
District Mental Health
Education Association Service Center
Medical Society
Republican Headquarters
Democratic Headquarters
Unit for Retarded Children
Police and Firemen's Association
Labor Organizations
United Council of Churches
Rotary
Kiwanis
4-H
Exchange

List Others

## C. PLANNING SESSION FOR COMMUNITY SURVEY*

Why conduct a survey? How will it be used? What will it do for the community? How should the survey be organized? Who will do the work? When should it be done? What specific new information are you seeking? How will it be used?

Why conduct a survey??--To determine community needs and wants in terms of Adult Education offerings, Recreation Programs, school curriculum and programs.

How will it be used??--To plan adult education programs around community needs and wants. To start new programs. To discover new teachers and community leaders. To give the public a chance to say what they want to say. To find better ways of serving the public.

What will it do for the community??--It will provide them with new opportunity. It will make them feel needed and wanted. It will give each individual a chance to say what they like and dislike about services they are being provided (or not provided).

How should the survey be organized??-Develop a survey instrument designed to get the information you want. Use existing structures to get the personnel for leadership and leg work. If ones does not exist, create one. Train the leaders and train the workers.

When should it be done??--In the summer or very early in the fall.

What specific new information are you seeking??--How many below high school completion want to take courses for credit? What people like and dislike about schools, government, services, etc. What new ways can services be provided for people?

How will it be used??--It will be used to provide better service for people. It might help on the next bond election. It will provide a way to communicate with all of the people.

* John E. Rudig, Community Education Needs/Resource Assessment Guidebook (Pitman, N.J.: Educational Improvement Center, 1974), p.79.

## D. SURVEY METHODS*

Good organization and administration imply continuous survey and evaluation. The use of various survey approaches helps the community education leader to keep in close touch with what people are feeling, thinking, saying, and doing. It is a necessary process in the assessment of people's wants and needs and in discovering resources to help fulfill people's learning desires.

Some of the methods of survey include:

1. Observation--recording (mentally or in writing) the important things observed in meetings and in the reactions and responses of individuals.
2. Face-to-face conversation.
3. Use of the telephone.
4. Interviews.
5. The use of a form of questionnaire in the public press--people can answer questions, clip form from paper, and return to designated person.
6. Radio and television appeals.
7. Panel discussions.
8. Distribution of a questionnaire.

Some of the reasons for using a prepared survey include:

1. To learn something of people's wants and needs.
2. To discover leaders and other community resources for fulfilling needs.
3. To locate space for conducting programs of learning.
4. To create interest and to learn something of the range of interests of people in the community.
5. To ascertain how citizens evaluate the community education program.
6. To locate some of the fragmenting aspects of the community.
7. To identify certain kinds of problems both of individuals and of the community.

8. To gather opinion of the solution of certain problems.

9. To gain public support--moral, financial, and technical.

10. To help prepare people for curriculum change.

Some questions to be raised before conducting a comprehensive survey include:

1. Is the subject of the survey appropriate for public analysis and response?

2. Is the survey the best method for obtaining the desired information?

3. Will the facts gathered be out-of-date and/or of no interest by the time they are obtained?

4. Are you certain that the information is not already available?

5. How and by whom will the results be used?

Infinite care should be exercised in the preparation of any questionnaire that is to be completed by citizens in the community. The checklist following this page should be carefully studied and used as a guide.

In the organization and administration of the community education program, there is a constant effort to bring people, ideas, and materials into such a relationship that jobs get done. The survey is an essential tool for fulfilling this objective. The use of a comprehensive paper-and-pencil-type survey should be postponed until there is already considerable involvement in the community education program and until some evidence of acceptance of the program can be obtained.

* John E. Radig, Community Education Needs/Resource Assessment Guidebook. (Pitman, N.J.: Educational Improvement Center, 1974), pp. 81-82.

## E. CHECKLIST FOR SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE*

Before distributing a questionnaire in connection with conducting a survey, the following questions should be answered:

1. Has the questionnaire been carefully reviewed and approved by the appropriate authority?
2. What is the purpose of making the survey?
3. Are you satisfied that the questionnaire is the best method available to obtain the desired information?
4. What group is involved in the survey?
5. Is the subject appropriate for the indicated public?
6. Are persons other than yourself to be involved in administering the survey? If so, have they been properly informed and prepared for their responsibilities?
7. Are you sufficiently trained and experienced to build the questionnaire and to conduct the survey?
8. Have you devised a workable method for distributing and collecting the questionnaire and for assembling the data?
9. Is the public so large that a sample should be used?
10. Have you conferred with the best available authority to determine the appropriate sample? How many cases--how to select them?
11. Is the title of the survey clear and concise? Is it easily understood?
12. Are the instructions for completing the survey clear and concise?
13. Have you stated one or more hypotheses to be proven or disproven?
14. Is the personal information requested only that which is actually needed? Can it be easily provided?
15. Is the survey instrument as brief as possible? For community groups, it should not be more than two pages (one sheet) front and back.
16. Is the paper of such quality that the printing is clear, even though both sides are used?
17. Does the instrument appear crowded?
18. Are questions arranged in sequence from least difficult to more difficult?

## CHECKLIST FOR SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE(Cont)

19. Do questions engage attention and interest?

20. Are there any questions which might embarrass the respondent?

21. Are there any questions that encourage guessing?

22. Are there any ambiguous questions?

23. Are all questions of such nature that answers require only a minimum amount of work by the respondent?

24. Are all questions composed of simple, familiar words?

25. Are all questions clear and concise?

26. Are there any leading questions that suggest answers?

27. Do any questions include catchwords, stereotypes, or words with emotional connotations?

28. Does the space for answering allow for all possible responses?

29. Are answers to be selected limited to not more than three qualifying works, such as, good-better-best?

30. Is adequate space provided for answers to open-ended questions, if such are used?

31. Is the arrangement such that answers can be easily and readily tabulated?

32. Have you given the questionnaire a pretest or pilot study?

33. Have you revised appropriately from the pretest information?

* John E. Radig, Community Education Needs/Resource Assessment Guidebook. (Pitman, N.J.: Educational Improvement Center, 1974), p.83.

## F. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR CONDUCTING A NEEDS ASSESSMENT*

1. Conducting a needs assessment to determine:

   a. Demographic Date

      (Much of this may be obtained through existing sources of information. Census, Datafile, previous reports)

   b. Social problems: juvenile and adult

   c. Family problems: needs, wants

   d. Educational and vocational needs and wants

   e. Community-wide and individual problems

   f. Cultural problems

   g. Economic problems

   h. Facility requirements

   i. Senior citizens

   j. Volunteerism

   k. Interest areas

   l. Health needs

   m. Recreation and leisure

   n. Ideas and suggestions

   o. Other

2. Providing evaluation and feedback

   a. Allowing community to evaluate selected topics

   b. Identifying effective and ineffective communication techniques

3. Offering service to clients and staff by

   a. Identifying staff

   b. Identifying leaders

   c. Identifying those with specific needs

   d. Pinpointing resource people, volunteers

4. Giving public relations help

   a. Identifying ways of disseminating information to community

   b. Expanding public relations opportunities

   c. Advertising existing services

   d. Letting community know we are concerned

   e. Stimulating interest in the community education concept

   f. Providing a means of community involvement(surveyors, respondents)

   g. Bringing alienated adults into the fold who find nothing good in the community, but who, eventually, can be turned on to work for the community.

5. Awareness

   a. To determine community's awareness of the program

   b. To determine what community knows and what it would like to know about the schools, agencies, or the community.

6. Attitudes

   a. About school

   b. About community

   c. About accountability

   d. About feelings toward schools and the community

7. Clients - Identification of persons who would like to participate in various classes.

8. Identification of resources - To develop a list of resource people, teachers and volunteers.

9. Dropout problems - "Why do individuals drop out of school?"

10. Identification of ways to involve the total community in community affairs.

11. Other

* "A Guide for Community School Advisory Councils", San Diego Center for Community Education, Superintendent of Schools, Department of Education, San Diego, CA., 1975.

## G. STAGES IN EVALUATION OF COMMUNITY EDUCATION*

| Stage | Identification of Community Needs and Interests | Specification of the program | Program Implementation | Examination of program outcomes |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Basic Decision | What disciplines and domains are to be considered for inclusion in the Community Education program? | Should the specified program be adopted or modified? | What corrective actions must be taken? | What alterations in the Community Education program ought to be made for the next year to best meet the program's objectives? |
| Major Questions to be Answered | What programs and offerings do the residents of this community wish to receive?<br><br>What financial resources are the citizens willing to commit?<br><br>What human and other resources are available within the community? | Are the plans consonant with the identified needs?<br><br>Given the available financial, human and other resources, is the planned program feasible? | 1. Is the program being implemented according to plan?<br><br>2. Are appropriate deviations from plans being made when unanticipated problems or benefits become apparent? | Has the program achieved the cognitive, performance and/or effective outcomes it was intended to achieve?<br><br>Were the participants satisfied with what they received?<br><br>Was the community satisfied with their Community Education program? |
| Data Sources | Stratified random sample of community members which includes representation for all major socio-economic and ethnic groups.<br><br>Public records, e.g. bond issue passage.<br><br>Special interest and expertise groups. | A panel of colleagues and other relevant individuals such as<br>a. leaders in other Community Education programs.<br>b. local merchants<br>c. community college faculty.<br>d. political office holders.<br>e. substantive specialists in included disciplines.<br><br>A representative community group. | Community Education staff.<br><br>Program participants.<br><br>A representative community group. | Program participants.<br><br>Samples of:<br>-participants.<br>-community at large. |
| Data Collection Methods | Loosely structured interviews of a small sample to identify general concerns.<br><br>Structured interview or questionnaire administered to larger sample.<br><br>Interviews with individuals who could contribute expertise, facilities or material. | Circulate plans to the panel to obtain their written reactions and criticisms using a delphi technique to obtain consensus.<br><br>Convene community group to review plans and panel reactions, and decide on necessary modifications. | Periodic questionnaires to staff and participants.<br><br>In depth interviews of a small sample of each respondent group to explore areas where problems seem to exist. | Measures of objectives attainment (e.g. achievement tests, on-the-job performance) gathered during or at the conclusion of the program's operation.<br><br>Interviews conducted by external evaluator. |
| Audiences for Evaluation Report | Community at large through public media and a readily available report. | Panel and community reviewers to insure accuracy.<br><br>Major audience for evaluation of plans would be Community Education administration and legally constituted authority, e.g., board of education. | Community Education program administration and staff. | Community Education program administration and legally constituted responsible authority (e.g., board of education).<br><br>Subsequently a report would be issued to the community by program administrator. |

* William J. Wright and Beverly L. Anderson, "An Approach to Evaluating Community Education," Community Education Journal, Vol. 5, No. 2 (March/April, 1975), p.39.

This publication was made possible through a Federal grant under the Community Schools Act of 1974 (P.L. 93-380, 20 U.S.C. 1864, Section 405) received from the U.S. Office of Education, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. However, the opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the U.S. Office of Education, and no official endorsement by the U.S. Office of Education should be inferred.